

## *Frequently Asked Questions on Applying for Federal Employment*

### **Where Can I Find Information About Federal Jobs?**

- 1) USAJOBS [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) is the official website for U.S. government *civilian job opportunities*.
  - a) This site has thousands of job listings (updated daily).
  - b) It is easy to search for opportunities that match your education, experience, desired locations, etc.
- 2) Contractor jobs (e.g., Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, etc.,) are not advertised on USAJOBS.

### **What Is a “Civilian Employee”?**

- 1) A civilian is basically a federal employee that is not active duty military.
- 2) Nearly all civilian positions in the Air Force, Army, Navy, etc., require no military commitment at all.
  - Those few civilian positions that do require you to be in the Reserves or the National Guard clearly say so in the job announcement.

### **How Can I Search and Apply for Federal Civilian Jobs Where I Want to Work?**

- 1) Go to [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)
- 2) In the “Location” block, enter your hometown and state (or the city and state where you are willing to relocate).
  - If you want to see only jobs at or near Hill, enter “Hill AFB”.
- 3) Click on the blue “Search” key.
- 4) A list will appear showing federal jobs available within a 20 mile radius of the location you selected. (You may adjust the radius to refine your search.) There will likely be several pages of announcements.
- 5) Select an announcement that you want to view.
- 6) Review the “Job Requirements” section of the announcement to see if you qualify.
- 7) To apply for the job, carefully follow the instructions on the “How to Apply” and “Required Documents” tabs on the upper right side of the announcement.
- 8) Save or print a copy of the job announcement for future reference.

### **For Which Positions May I Apply?**

- 1) Each USAJOBS job announcement explains exactly who may apply.
- 2) When you set up your USAJOBS account there are questions to help you determine:
  - If you can only apply for jobs open to the general public; or
  - If you are a “status candidate” who might also be able to respond to more restrictive announcements.

### **What Are “Status Candidates”?**

- 1) Current federal civilian employees on non-temporary positions in the competitive service.
- 2) Former federal civilian employees with reinstatement rights.  
[https://help.usajobs.gov/index.php/What\\_is\\_reinstatement%3F\\_Am\\_I\\_eligible%3F](https://help.usajobs.gov/index.php/What_is_reinstatement%3F_Am_I_eligible%3F)
- 3) Certain veterans eligible under the Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA).  
<https://www.fedshirevets.gov/job/shav/index.aspx/>
- 4) Persons with non-competitive appointment eligibility (due to disability, displacement, etc.)

### **How Do I know If I Will Be Able to Get a Security Clearance?**

- 1) Some people avoid applying for positions because of the requirement for a security clearance.
- 2) If you have an isolated incident in your past, and you are open and truthful about the situation during the background investigation, this is often not a problem.

## Frequently Asked Questions on Applying for Federal Employment

- 3) The following websites may help you decide if obtaining a security clearance will likely be an issue for you:
  - <http://usmilitary.about.com/cs/generalinfo/a/security.htm> or:
  - <http://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/security-clearance-jobs/getting-security-clearance.html>
- 4) Once you have been offered a job (contingent upon satisfactory completion of a background investigation), you will be required to complete a Standard Form 86, *Questionnaire for National Security Positions*.
- 5) For further information regarding background investigations you may visit the OPM investigations website at
  - <http://www.opm.gov/investigate/index.aspx>

### USAJOBS Seems Overwhelming – Where Do I Start?

- 1) **Create your USAJOBS account.**
  - a) Go to the USAJOBS website [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) and click on “Create an account to get started” at top of the page.
  - b) Creating an account will let you:
    - Build your profile;
    - Create/upload resumes and other documents;
    - Apply for jobs;
    - Set up job announcement alerts (Saved Searches), etc.
- 2) **Set up Saved Searches to be emailed about job announcements you don’t want to miss.**
  - a) Once you have created a USAJOBS account, click on “Saved Searches” in the menu column.
  - b) Click the “Create a new saved search” tab and fill out your criteria about location, occupation, pay, etc.
    - You can create up to 10 separate searches.
    - You will be emailed when new jobs meeting your criteria are posted on USAJOBS.
- 3) **How to make USAJOBS work for you.**
  - a) Check out the Help Center for USAJOBS: [www.usajobs.gov/Help](http://www.usajobs.gov/Help)
  - b) Watch the Hill AFB video about USAJOBS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BicxsWEY6c>
  - c) Utah Dept. of Workforce Services: <https://jobs.utah.gov/jobseeker/workshops/north/index.html>
  - d) Email your questions about USAJOBS to: [Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil](mailto:Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil)

### Do I Always Have to Apply through USAJOBS?

- 1) **NOT ALWAYS!!!**... for a few critical-shortage occupations that are in high demand, Hill AFB may:
  - a) Accept resumes directly; and
  - b) Name-request candidates who are fully-qualified (e.g., experience, education, etc.).
- 2) **Direct Hire Authority (DHA) for Critical Air Force Sustainment Center (AFSC) Skilled Trade Positions** allows Hill AFB to name-request fully qualified candidates for **some positions** in the following occupations:

WG-2602, <b>Electronic Measurement Equipment Mechanic</b>	WG-2604, <b>Electronics Mechanic</b>
WG-2606, <b>Electronic Industrial Controls Mechanic</b>	WG-2610, <b>Electronic Integrated Systems Mechanic</b>
WG-2854, <b>Electrical Equipment Repairer</b>	WG-2892, <b>Aircraft Electrician</b>
WG-3378, <b>Precision Measurement Equipment Calibrator</b>	WG-3414, <b>Machinist</b>

***Frequently Asked Questions on Applying for Federal Employment***

WG-3703, <b>Welder</b>	WG-3705, <b>Nondestructive Tester</b>
WG-3707, <b>Metalizing Equipment Operator</b>	WG-3711, <b>Electroplater</b>
WG-3806, <b>Sheet Metal Mechanic (Aircraft)</b>	WG-4102, <b>Painter (Aircraft)</b>
WG-4352, <b>Composite Fabricator</b>	WG-4749, <b>Maintenance Mechanic</b>
WG-4850, <b>Bearing Reconditioner</b>	WG-5301, <b>HVAC Equipment Mechanic</b>
WG-5306, <b>Air Conditioning Equipment Mechanic</b>	WG-5378, <b>Powered Support Equipment Mechanic</b>
WG-5401, <b>Industrial Equipment Operator</b>	WG-5406, <b>Utility Systems Operator</b>
WG-5701, <b>Mobile Equipment Operator (Missile Transporter)</b>	WG-5803, <b>Heavy Mobile Equipment Mechanic (Missiles)</b>
WG-6652, <b>Aircraft Ordnance Systems Mechanic</b>	WG-6656, <b>Special Weapons Systems Mechanic</b>
WG-8255, <b>Pneudraulic System Mechanic</b>	WG-8268, <b>Aircraft Pnuedraulic System Mechanic</b>
WG-8602, <b>Aircraft Engine Mechanic</b>	WG-8840, <b>Aircraft Mechanical Parts Repairer</b>
WG-8852, <b>Aircraft Mechanic</b>	GS-1601, <b>Industrial Production Manager</b>

- 3) ***Expedited Hire Authority (EHA) for Defense Acquisition Workforce Positions*** allows Hill AFB to name-request fully qualified candidates for ***SOME POSITIONS*** (those that are acquisition-coded) in the following occupations:

***\* Considered to be a "Science and Engineering Professional" occupation.***

***\*\* Considered to be a "Business Professional" occupation.***

0346, <b>Logistics Management Specialist**</b>	0850, <b>Electrical (Power) Engineer*</b>	1150, <b>Industrial Specialist**</b>
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## *Frequently Asked Questions on Applying for Federal Employment*

0501, <b>Financial Management Specialist**</b>	0854, <b>Computer Engineer*</b>	1301, <b>Physical Scientist*</b>
0510, <b>Accountant**</b>	0855, <b>Electronics Engineer*</b>	1310, <b>Physicist*</b>
0560, <b>Budget Analyst**</b>	0861, <b>Aerospace Engineer*</b>	1320, <b>Chemist*</b>
0801, <b>General Engineer*</b>	0893, <b>Chemical Engineer*</b>	1515, <b>Operations Research Analyst*</b>
0803, <b>Safety Engineer*</b>	0896, <b>Industrial Engineer*</b>	1520, <b>Mathematician*</b>
0806, <b>Materials Engineer*</b>	1101, <b>Business and Industry Specialist**</b>	1550, <b>Computer Scientist*</b>
0819, <b>Environmental Engineer*</b>	1101, <b>Acquisition Program Manager**</b>	1910, <b>Quality Assurance Specialist*</b>
0830, <b>Mechanical Engineer*</b>	1102, <b>Contract Specialist**</b>	2210, <b>Info Technology Specialist**</b>

### **How Do I Maximize My Opportunities of Being Considered for Science and Engineering Occupations?**

- 1) **Engineer and Scientist candidates with a qualifying BS or higher degree** in engineering, computer science, or other professional scientific field (**not engineering technology**):
  - a) May submit their resumes (and unofficial transcripts) directly to: [AFSC.ENRW.EngineeringHiring@us.af.mil](mailto:AFSC.ENRW.EngineeringHiring@us.af.mil); and
  - b) Should also apply to Public Announcements for these occupations on USAJOBS to make certain they are considered for positions that are not acquisition-coded.
- 2) **Engineer and Scientist candidates within 9 months of obtaining a qualifying BS or higher degree** may also apply directly to Hill AFB at [AFSC.ENRW.EngineeringHiring@us.af.mil](mailto:AFSC.ENRW.EngineeringHiring@us.af.mil).
- 3) The **Hill AFB science and engineering recruitment team**:
  - a) Reviews resumes and transcripts;
  - b) Determines qualifications, candidate availability, etc.; and
  - c) Maintains application documents in a secure repository for viewing by appropriate supervisors across Hill AFB.
- 4) **Pathways, PALACE Acquire and DoD SMART Program Interns** may not be hired using Expedited Hire Authority.
  - a) Students seeking intern opportunities must apply to announcements on USAJOBS.
  - b) Email questions about Science and Engineering internships and scholarships to [AFSC.ENRW.EngineeringHiring@us.af.mil](mailto:AFSC.ENRW.EngineeringHiring@us.af.mil).

### **How Do I Maximize My Opportunities of Being Considered for Business Professional Occupations?**

- 1) **Candidates for Business Professional occupations listed above** should apply to public announcements and intern program announcements on USAJOBS.
- 2) Resumes are only accepted directly at recruiting events such as job and career fairs because **there is not a large external demand for these positions**.
- 3) **There is no standing register that is maintained separately at Hill AFB for Business Professional occupations**.

### **How Do I Maximize My Opportunities of Being Considered for Skilled Trade Occupations?**

- 1) **Experienced candidates** may now apply directly to Hill AFB for some skilled trades.
  - a) Candidates with experience, education or training in the occupations listed above may send:
    - A very detailed resume, and
    - Unofficial transcripts (if applicable) to:
    - [Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil](mailto:Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil)

## *Frequently Asked Questions on Applying for Federal Employment*

- b) Qualified candidates will be referred for 90 days to supervisors who have vacancies.
  - Resumes need to be updated every 90 days if the candidate is still interested in being considered.
  - Supervisors may interview and name-select qualified candidates for their position(s).
- 2) **Candidates without experience must still apply for skilled trades occupations through USAJOBS:**
  - a) Those who do not have directly related education, training and/or experience for one or more of the occupations listed above need to apply to USAJOBS vacancy announcement(s).
  - b) **RESUMES WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED DIRECTLY FOR THE WG-05 HELPER LEVEL.**
  - c) **Candidates without experience are highly encouraged to contact their local Technology College about training programs to improve their chances of being hired.**
- 3) **Candidates who want to apply for SKILLED TRADE OCCUPATIONS NOT LISTED ABOVE must go through USAJOBS.**

### **How Do I Maximize My Opportunities of Being Considered for Pathways Internships?**

- 1) **Pathways Interns** may not be hired using Direct Hire Authority.
- 2) Students seeking intern opportunities must apply to announcements on USAJOBS.
- 3) Recent graduates from technical colleges, community colleges and universities may apply directly to Hill AFB if their:
  - a) **Technology degree or skilled trade certificate** program qualifies them for a skilled trade listed above; or
  - b) **Professional engineering, computer science, or other physical science degree at the BS, Master's, or PhD level** qualifies them for a professional science and engineering occupation listed above.
- 4) **Email us your questions about the Pathways Intern program:**
  - For skilled trades Pathways advice, email: [Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil](mailto:Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil)
  - For science and engineering Pathways advice, email: [AFSC.ENRW.EngineeringHiring@us.af.mil](mailto:AFSC.ENRW.EngineeringHiring@us.af.mil)

### **How Do I Know Which Federal Jobs and Grade Levels I am Qualified for?**

- 1) **Each USAJOBS announcement identifies specific qualification requirements** (e.g., education, experience level, physical requirements, etc.).
- 2) If you want to figure out the various occupations for which you are qualified, a good place to start is the **Handbook of Occupational Groups and Families** at: [www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/classifying-federal-wage-system-positions](http://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/classifying-federal-wage-system-positions)
- 3) Scroll through the definitions for each occupational “series” (4-digit classification code), and click on the hyperlink to the occupation’s job grading standard, (a hyperlink appears as blue, underlined occupation title), which:
  - a) Describes the **typical duties and responsibilities of jobs in the occupation**, so you can see how your personal experience relates to the work being described;
  - b) Differentiates between the **work performed at different pay grade levels** so that you can see what grade level is the closest match for your past experience; and
  - c) Describes the **physical requirements** of the occupation.
- 1) **For skilled trades**, emphasis is on **quality of knowledge and experience**, and not necessarily the length of time.
  - a) You must give **EVIDENCE OF experience and training** that show you possess the **quality level** of knowledge and skill necessary to perform the duties of the position for which you wish to be considered.
    - If you apply through USAJOBS, the Air Force Personnel Center will determine your qualifications.
    - If you apply at [Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil](mailto:Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil) Hill AFB subject matter experts will determine your qualifications.
  - b) **You will be asked to complete an occupational questionnaire for each occupation you are interested in.**

## Frequently Asked Questions on Applying for Federal Employment

- c) ***Your resume needs to show evidence of experience and training to support your questionnaire responses.***

### What Will My Salary Be?

- 1) **Pay System Codes.** The letters (WG, WL, WS, GS, AcqDemo, etc.) in the “Series and Grade” block of an announcement represent the federal pay system for the job.
  - a) Skilled trade occupations start with WG, WL or WS and are paid hourly rates.
  - b) Knowledge-based occupations start with GS, AcqDemo or other letters and are paid annual salary rates.
- 2) **Pay Grade Tables for federal jobs in Utah.**
  - a) There are 15 pay grades in the white collar General Schedule (GS) pay system, and each grade has ten steps.
    - **For current GS salaries, go to:**  
[https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2017/RUS\\_h.pdf](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/salary-tables/pdf/2017/RUS_h.pdf)
  - b) The Federal Wage System hourly wage table for blue-collar occupations includes WG, WL and WS pay plans.
    - **For current skilled trade hourly rates, go to:**  
<https://www.cpms.osd.mil/Content/AF%20Schedules/survey-sch/139/139R-13Sep2016.html>
  - c) DoD Acquisition Workforce Personnel Demonstration (AcqDemo) uses pay bands (NH, NJ, NK).
    - **For current Acq Demo salary ranges, go to:**  
<http://acqdemo.hci.mil/broadband.html>
- 3) **Pay You Can Expect.**
  - a) ***You will typically be placed in the first step of the pay grade for which you are selected.***
  - b) Occasionally, exceptions can be made for applicants with hard-to-find and highly-desirable skills.
  - c) Employees in certain occupations and/or geographic areas may also receive special, higher rates of pay.
  - d) In certain situations, organizations may be able to offer recruitment, relocation, or retention incentives.
- 4) **Jobs with Advertised Promotion Potential.**
  - a) If you are qualified at a grade level lower than you think you can accept, make sure that you ask whether or not the position is targeted to a higher grade.
    - You may be hired at a lower pay grade, but are then eligible for career promotions without competition as long as you are performing successfully - ***ask how far apart these career promotions would occur.***
    - ***For skilled trades*** there is no minimum time between grade levels – it is based on skills proficiency.
    - ***For white collar occupations*** you typically need one year of experience and 52 weeks’ time-in-grade.
    - ***For certain engineering jobs*** there is ***accelerated promotion*** at the lower grades – instead of one year time-in-grade you only need six months to go from GS-5 to GS-7, GS-7 to GS-9 (and sometimes GS-9 to GS-11).
- 5) **It is not all about the salary!!!**
  - a) Consider carefully before turning down an opportunity for a federal position based only on pay.
  - b) A generous leave program, extensive health care options, the Thrift Savings Plan with matching funds, job security, flexible work schedules, – there are many benefits to consider before you decide.
  - c) ***Get info about federal benefits*** at: <https://www.usajobs.gov/Help/working-in-government/benefits/>

### Is a One-Page Resume Good Enough When Applying for Federal Jobs? **NO!!!**

- 1) **In the private sector**, a one-page resume highlighting your work experience and education is all that is needed to get you a first interview. ***That is not how it works in the federal government.***
- 2) **THINK OF YOUR FEDERAL RESUME AS YOUR INTERVIEW ON PAPER.**
  - a) Writing a federal resume is a lot different than creating a traditional one.

## ***Frequently Asked Questions on Applying for Federal Employment***

- b) Even though you are not applying through USAJOBS your resume still needs to be very detailed and should be tailored to the occupation for which you are applying.
  - Think of Knowledges, Skills and Abilities (KSAs) listed in the announcement as interview questions.
  - Think of Job Elements listed in the announcement as interview questions
  - Think of Tasks listed on the Occupational Questionnaire as interview questions.
- c) Raters cannot assume anything, so you must include clear and specific details about your specialized education, training, skills and experience.
  - ***A one-page resume is not going to give you much chance of being interviewed in person.***
- 3) **Don't just copy and paste keywords** or repeat what is in the USAJOBS announcement.
  - a) ***There needs to be evidence of education, training, skills and experience in your resume to support your claims.***
  - b) It is clear to raters who just copied keywords and who is incorporating them into real-world examples.
- 4) **Don't be tempted to lump many years of experience into one block on your resume.**
  - a) If you worked for many years at the same company or in the military, you likely had more than one position.
  - b) **Divide your relevant job experience into logical blocks to get best results.**
- 5) **For each block of work experience that you list on your resume, make sure you include:**
  - a) Name, city and state of the employer;
  - b) Position title;
  - c) Start and end dates (including the month and year); and
  - d) Average number of hours you worked per week.
- 6) **List any certificates, degrees, and training courses you have that are related to the occupation.**
  - Attach unofficial transcripts if you have received a technical college certificate or a university degree.
- 7) **Include personal references who can vouch for your character, work ethic and dependability.**
- 8) **Due to the volume of resumes, and in order to avoid any potential appearance of favoritism, the recruitment team will not critique individual resumes.**
- 9) **You need your application to stand out because so many people apply for federal jobs. For more tips on writing a federal resume, go to:**
  - **YouTube video:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8YX7o1PBoFk>
  - **The Resume Place:** <http://www.resume-place.com/2011/02/stop-using-your-private-industry-resume-to-apply-for-federal-jobs-on-usajobs-gov/>
  - **Military.Com:** <http://www.military.com/veteran-jobs/search/government-jobs/federal-job-resume-tips-for-2012.html>
  - **Go Government:** [http://gogovernment.org/how\\_to\\_apply/index.php](http://gogovernment.org/how_to_apply/index.php)
- 10) **For basic information about preparing for an interview, go to:**
  - <http://www.knaresourcegroup.com/2016/job-interviews/ace-skilled-trade-job-interview-5-simple-tips/> ;
  - <http://blog.hiregroundsoftware.com/job-seekers/great-interview-tips-for-skilled-trades-positions/> ; and
  - Search the Web for “Wisconsin Successful Interviewing for the Skilled Trades” to find a guide with excellent tips.

## **WHERE TO GO FOR MORE INFORMATION**



### ***Frequently Asked Questions on Applying for Federal Employment***

- 1) ***In addition to the USAJOBS website***, there are several other valuable sources of information on applying for federal employment.
- 2) It is a good idea to check out the ***website for the agency*** (e.g., IRS, Air Force, Homeland Security, etc.) for vacancies that interest you. They can give you a lot of detail about their role in serving the public and provide glimpses into the work culture you can expect.
- 3) The one-stop source of info for ***separating military members and veterans seeking civilian employment*** is at: <http://www.fedshirevets.gov>
- 4) For more tips on writing an ***effective federal resume***, read about *Resume and Application Tips* at: [www.usajobs.gov/Help/faq/application/documents/resume/what-to-include/](http://www.usajobs.gov/Help/faq/application/documents/resume/what-to-include/)
- 5) See the Hill AFB video about applying on USAJOBS: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8BicxsWEY6c>
- 6) If you have specific questions about applying for federal employment, ***email your questions to:*** [Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil](mailto:Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil)
- 7) The ***Utah Department of Workforce Services (DWS)*** has advisors, workshops, info sessions and on-line information to assist job seekers in finding employment. <http://jobs.utah.gov>
- 8) There are many ***Air Reserve Technician (ART) positions*** at Hill AFB. To learn more about these job opportunities, go to: [www.afrc.af.mil/AboutUs/JobOpportunities.aspx](http://www.afrc.af.mil/AboutUs/JobOpportunities.aspx)

***If you want an electronic copy of this document so that you may click on the hyperlinks, email [Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil](mailto:Hill.AFB.Outreach@us.af.mil)***